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The Honorable Daniel Inouye
Chairman, Senate Appropriations

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman, House Appropriations

The Honorable Norman Dicks
Ranking Member, House Appropriations

Dear Senators Inouye and Cochran, Chairman Rogers & Ranking Member Dicks,

I am writing on behalf of the world's largest general scientific society, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). The scientific community has grave concerns regarding the prospect of a 50 percent reduction in the budget of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) as proposed by the House of Representatives. We believe such a drastic reduction to OSTP's budget will dramatically inhibit the ability of the federal government to coordinate, prioritize and manage the federal research and development (R&D) effort. This kind of reduction would also seriously limit the ability to take appropriate account of science and technology considerations in the formulation of diverse policies.

OSTP was established and mandated by Congress in 1976 to advise the President, to develop both R&D priorities and science and technology related policies, and to lead interagency efforts. OSTP's unique role in the executive branch fosters collaborations between agencies while reducing redundancies and minimizing waste within federal programs. OSTP plays a critical role in and is a key player for implementing cost-effective measures to make the most effective and efficient use of federal resources. As just one example, OSTP is leading an interagency effort to harmonize reporting and assurance requirements across agencies, thereby reducing the administrative burden on scientists, on universities, and, of course, on the federal agency workforce.

OSTP provides exceptional advice to the President and to cabinet agencies. The Office is central to establishing and implementing critical national S&T policies in areas such as national security, health, science education, advanced manufacturing, and technology transfer to spur innovation and economic growth. These have great impact on the future of this country. Whether it involves providing advice during a local disaster, such as the Gulf Oil Spill, or providing technical expertise in the face of a global disaster, such as the earthquake in Fukushima, OSTP staff are critically involved in shaping and implementing policies.

Please do all you can to preserve OSTP and its ability to perform its vital functions.

Sincerely,

Alan I. Leshner